

The Augusta Pulse

For the Employees and Friends of the Augusta VA Medical Center • Winter 2006



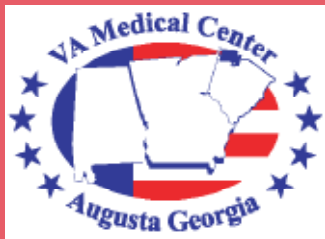
This Issue

**The Changing Face
of Long Term Care**

Training Programs

CREW Pilot





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The Augusta Pulse is published quarterly for the employees, volunteers, partners and friends of the Augusta VA Medical Center. To submit articles or story ideas for possible publication, contact Janice Kennedy, (706) 823-1733 or via e-mail at Janice.Kennedy@va.gov.

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On the cover:

World War II Veteran, Kenneth Roberts
with Sarah Roberts, wife of 47 years

Director's Message

The beginning of a new year is always an exciting time when we are energized with the upcoming year, reflective of the old one, and always amazed at how quickly the years seem to pass. The Augusta VA Medical Center managed to complete many projects and accomplishments during the short-lived year of 2005, all while providing outstanding services to our veterans and active duty personnel. Highlights of some of these accomplishments include: a One Year Anniversary Celebration for the combined U.S. Army Southeast Regional Medical Command and VA Southeast Network Active Duty Rehabilitation Unit, along with national recognition of this unit for receiving the prestigious Olin E. Teague Award; opening of a new state-of-the-art 18 bed Critical Care Unit; and the initiation of the collaborative Coordinated Recruitment and Staffing Project with the Department of Defense.

In addition, phase two of the Spinal Cord Injury Unit renovation project is expected to reach completion in 2006. This project includes the expansion of the Spinal Cord Injury Outpatient Clinic and renovations to the patient therapy and administrative support areas. In accordance with the CARES Commission recommendations, a project will begin in 2006 to expand the number of spinal cord inpatient beds by 11.

Focus will continue on our Seamless Transition program in 2006 in an effort to ease the transition of the OEF/OIF veterans into the VA system. A Primary Care Team dedicated to OEF/OIF veterans and a comprehensive PTSD treatment program are being created along with other initiatives to address not only medical needs, but psychosocial, family, financial, and child care issues. A full-time VA/DoD Social Work Liaison and Nurse Case Manager will continue to be located at Fort Gordon.

I am looking forward to another great year filled with new challenges and opportunities to serve our nations heroes — past, present and future.

James F. Trusley III

Director, Augusta VA Medical Center



Downtown Division



Uptown Division

Trainee Programs Provide Avenues for Succession Planning

To prepare future leaders for the VHA and fill identified administrative mission critical positions, a variety of trainee programs are available. The



*Pictured left to right standing: Chris Chappell, Aaron Love, Lori Hall and Ronnie Smith
Seated left to right: Maria Briggs and Estella Middy*

Augusta VAMC is proud to participate in these programs and host nine trainees in a variety of fields. These individuals are the future of VHA.

The Graduate Health Administration Training Program (GHATP) Board was created in 1992 from the restructuring of the Hospital Administration Residency Program. This resulted in the largest and most successful training program in the Veterans Health Administration, the GHATP Administrative Resident/Fellow Program. A path was produced for professional development to produce executives who can successfully lead the VA in a challenging health care industry. As a result of this success, the

"It prepared me for the management world of the VA. I have been able to look at things from a different window, a broader window."

Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Administration and Operations asked the GHATP Board to revamp the Health System Specialist (HSS) Trainee Program. The HSS Trainee Program became the Health System Management

(HSM) Trainee Program. The HSM trainee program is designed for current VHA employees to develop skills to analyze and manage healthcare delivery systems, processes and operations. Trainees are placed under the guidance of an approved mentor from senior management, including Directors, Chiefs of Staff and Associate Directors. Each year, only 20 facilities are selected to recruit for these positions. Augusta's current HSM Trainee is Maria Briggs who joined us from the Miami VA. Dr. Thomas Kiernan, Chief of Staff, is her preceptor. The Administrative Resident/Fellow program is for Master's level students and graduates. A resident requires 12 months of practical experience before their Master's degree is awarded and a fellow has already received their degree from an accredited university before beginning their training experience. An approved preceptor acts as a guide and champion for an Administrative Resident/Fellow's career, and must be a Medical Center or Network Director meeting certain educational requirements. There are 39 approved preceptors for 2006-2007. James F. Trusley III, Director, Augusta VAMC, is a preceptor to Ronnie Smith, Administrative Resident. Ronnie is fulfilling his degree requirement to receive a Master's degree in Health Administration from the University of Alabama-Birmingham. "Working in the Director's Office has been an exciting experience, with a

lot of meaningful work through various projects. Working for the government has proven to be quite a bit different from the activities in the private sector."

The Technical Career Field (TCF) is a two-year internship program that is centrally funded in fields where full-time training in VHA procedures and regulations are required. Ken Green,

RHIA, is a current Health Information Management Intern. Both Susan Lloyd and Susan Bookstaver have acted as his preceptor to oversee his training. According to Ken, "The TCF Intern program is an amazing mixture of training and networking that helps prepare HIM professionals for a successful career within the VA. My experience at the Augusta VA has been very positive thus far and I'm looking forward to the completion of my training in September

"The TCF Intern program is an amazing mixture of training and networking that helps prepare HIM professionals for a successful career within the VA."

2006." Ken's training has included a detail assignment as Acting Chief of HIM to the VAMC in Louisville, Kentucky.



Past trainees make great employees, pictured left to right: Angela Betts, Julie Dangar, and Sherry Williams

Augusta also hosts several VISN and facility funded trainees. Estella Middy, is a Contract Specialist Trainee assigned to the Network Contracting Office and currently training in the areas of contract development, procedures, regulations, and contract management related to VA acquisitions. Other trainees include Lori Hall, Medical Administration Specialist; Heather Grosvenor, HR Specialist; and Mary Kinzler, HR specialist.

Former trainees have made a home here in Augusta as well. Angela Betts, who came from the Jesse Brown VA in
continued on page 5

the Changing **FACE** of *Long Term Care*




Illustration by Brian Brockway, MS

The provision of long term care is changing in a dramatic way within the health care industry. The Augusta VAMC Nursing Home Care Unit is at the forefront of these changes, introducing innovative programs to improve the care of our nation's veterans. With the aging of the baby boom generation more attention and focus is being placed on long term care, which is one of the fastest growing segments of the health care industry. Such emphasis is generating positive changes to the environment of care and services available to our most senior veterans.

At the Augusta VA, traditional nursing home care has been enhanced through the segmenting of treatment areas to provide more individualized care tailored to the special needs of the patients. The Nursing Home Care Units located at the Uptown Division are comprised of 132 beds located on five units which include the Social Model and Behavioral Enhancement programs. Services avail-

able to the residents include medical evaluation, rehabilitative, restorative, palliative and hospice care.

The Social Model is designed to give special focus on socialization and quality of life activities, as opposed to a medical model of care. These care concepts and philosophy have been taken to the other nursing home units, where residents also participate in unique activities of daily living in a supportive and caring setting. An interdisciplinary team plans care based on the veteran's physical, psychosocial, social, and spiritual needs. The teams are comprised of social workers, chaplains, physicians, nurses, dietitians, clinical pharmacists, recreation therapists, veterans and their family members. This involvement in

their own care and that of a loved one helps to give ownership of the process to the veteran and their family.

Dr. Denise Evans, Service Line Executive for Mental Health and Geriatrics, notes that it is an exciting time for nursing home care at the Augusta VAMC, as new initiatives are changing the way care is delivered. Dr. Evans finds that the veterans are benefiting from the positive improvements taking place. Those sentiments are echoed by Delores Campbell, Acting Associate Nurse Executive for Mental Health and Geriatrics. Ms. Campbell is working with staff in the Nursing Home to continue the improvements by working to implement and create a more home-like environment. Physical alterations

"The Augusta VAMC Nursing Home Care Unit is at the forefront of these changes..."

to the units will include removing the traditional nurses' stations and creating large central areas for gathering and dining.



Veterans enjoy playing checkers and reminiscing while waiting for a haircut in the "Barber Shop"

In an effort to individualize the resident rooms, the facility interior designer is having rooms painted in updated colors and placing pictures on the walls reminiscent of special times and activities. The hallways have been given names, such as Patriots Street and Heroes Avenue, in order to help the residents feel that they live in a unique part of the unit. Their families also appreciate the ease of locating their loved one's room. In the dining areas, veterans are served on tables with centerpieces, table cloths and china. More liberal meal plans provide greater food choices. Throughout the units, aroma therapy scents like fresh bread and cookies baking help to recreate the home environment.

The focus on the unique contributions and characteristics of each resident is evident throughout the Social Model and is being integrated into the other units as well. One innovative approach to individualize the resident's rooms was devised by Denise Whitten, Recreation Therapist. Ms. Whitten created wreaths for the door leading into each resident's room that incorporated the veteran's personality and hobbies. For instance, a veteran that loves to paint has a wreath with a palette of colors and brushes. Nursing created "neighborhood teams" where resident preferences related to meals, bathing times and family interactions are accommodated in order to improve their quality of life.

Several programs have been developed over the years that greatly enrich the lives of residents. Sheri Smith, Music Therapist and Denise Whitten, Recreation

Therapist, work together using Life Story Books and Musical Bridges, an award winning program, to improve the cognitive ability and socialization of Alzheimer and

"These programs have received recognition as Best Practices and high marks by many surveyors and site visit teams to the units."

Dementia residents. The Life Story Books provide residents and their families an avenue to reminisce and detail their interests, preferences and the names of family and friends. Musical Bridges uses music therapy to enhance memory through an intergenerational group designed to create "bridges" between preschoolers and veterans. Finally, a complete old time Barber Shop has been recreated on the unit to give residents a unique place to get their hair cut. The experience is like stepping back in time, with murals depicting the interior of a traditional shop, complete with a list of barbering options and the prices of the past. This has helped to make personal grooming a more comfortable and enjoyable experience for residents.

Other creative therapeutic treatments have advanced along with the social experience of the residents. Staff has taken a leading role in creating original programs to benefit the daily functioning of the residents. These programs have received recognition

as Best Practices and high marks by many surveyors and site visit teams to the units. One such program, Quench It! improves the hydration of residents. This was developed in response to the careful monitoring of fluid depletion in residents. Nursing staff, dietitians, recreation therapists and volunteers work to incorporate good hydration practices into daily activities to enhance hydration. A hydration cart with music is used to deliver water between meal-times. Proper hydration has been shown to reduce the risk of infection, boost the immune system, and decrease the incidence of illness. Another popular program, Up and At 'Em, was created by an innovative team of nurses on Unit 2B. Deirdre Campbell, RN, even wrote a song, "Get 'Em Up!" and taught the tune to other staff members to encourage them to embrace the idea. The goal is to engage and increase the level of activity among residents who are medically and physically able to be out of their room. Residents participate in many activities inside the facility and surrounding grounds. They also participate in off-station outings such as fishing trips, rides around Augusta, visiting Ft. Gordon, attending movies and the annual City of Augusta Veteran's Day Parade. A third highly recognized program is Get Up and Go! This creative program involves



Music Therapist Sherri Smith singing with resident

improved bowel and bladder training for residents. The nursing staff monitor resident habits to determine when they need to use the restroom. A schedule is then set to get the residents up and assist them to the bathroom at those



Gardening is a favorite activity and brings back many fond memories

“Residents participate in many activities inside the facility and surrounding grounds. They also participate in off-station outings such as fishing trips...”

times. By getting the residents into a routine, the bladder is retrained so that residents have a decrease in problems with incontinence.

The Restorative Care Program, another component of the Nursing Home Care Unit, provides training to promote independence and functioning among residents. Particular attention is paid to increasing self-esteem and self-image. An interdisciplinary team develops a care plan for each resident that is responsive to individual needs. Residents are encouraged to perform self-care with staff members present to provide assistance and guidance as needed. The care teams work to promote health and well being, prevent deterioration and maintain maximum independence for the veteran.

With so many successful programs and new improvements on the horizon, long term care is a dynamic part of the Augusta VAMC. The staff, residents and families are motivated and involved in improving all aspects of the care provided. Such commitment to enhancing the quality of life for veterans is seen throughout the hospital, but it is clearly on display in the Nursing Home Care Unit.



Quench It!



Martin Luther King, Jr Observance Day

The Augusta VA Medical Center observed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with a special ceremony for all employees on January 13. The theme this year was In the Spirit of Unity and Service: Remember! Celebrate! Act! Reverend Byron C. Williams of Allen Chapel Baptist Church was the keynote speaker. Reverend Williams delivered a powerful speech on Dr. King as “The Servant Leader.” Another impressive component of the program was reflecting on the many timeless quotations by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., which remain as inspirational today, as the day they were spoken. Take time to read and reflect on the quotes listed below:

“I decided early to give my life to something eternal and absolute. Not to these little gods that are here today and gone tomorrow, but to God who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”

From “Rediscovering Lost Values,” Feb. 28, 1954

“I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.”

From the “I Have Dream” speech, August 28, 1963

“I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is greater than evil triumphant.”

Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech, December 10, 1964

Under Secretary of Health's Health Diversity Award For Cultural Competency Announced



Pictured from left to right: Dr. Michael Kussman, Deputy Under Secretary for Health; Dr. Rose Trinchler, SCIU Service Line Executive; Thomas Cappello, Acting Network Director, VA Southeast Network; Joy Hunter, Co-chair, Diversity Advisory Board; and Guy Richardson, Chair, African American Committee

The Augusta VA Active Duty Rehabilitation Unit, a combined effort between the U.S. Army Southeast Regional Medical Command (SERMC) and the VA Southeast Network 7, has been awarded the Level 2 Under Secretary for Health Diversity Award – Cultural Competency. The award was accepted by Dr. Rose Trinchler, Spinal Cord Injury Service Line Executive at Augusta VAMC, during the National Leadership Board meeting on January 18, in Washington D.C. The Diversity Award Program recognizes those facilities that have advanced the cause of diversity in the workplace and provided a positive role model for other facilities.

Local Volunteer Named as National DAVA Outstanding Auxiliary Member

Ethel H. Bussey-Mear, Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary (DAVA), Unit 10, Augusta, Georgia, has been selected the recipient of the DAVA Past National Commanders' Outstanding Auxiliary Member Award for 2005. This award recognizes the dedication and contributions made by an outstanding auxiliary member who works to enhance Auxiliary and DAV goals, and promote community service. As if serving as the current Department of Georgia Senior Vice Commander was not enough, Ethel is also a VA Voluntary Services (VAVS) Deputy Representative. Ethel has volunteered at the Augusta VAMC for over 12 years and has graciously and unselfishly given over 3,500 volunteers hours to the patients at the Augusta VA. Ethel considers herself to be a problem solver and has always worked with a can-do attitude, never saying "that's not my job." This is just one of the reasons friend and fellow DAVA member, Beulah Poulsen nominated Ethel. Working through her local unit, Ethel has led the way for many activities supporting hospitalized veterans and active duty military. This past year she coordinated shipping Christmas boxes to military men and women serving in Iraq; helped with Chapter Forget-Me-Not drives; assisted in the Christmas Stocking distribution at the Georgia War Veterans Nursing Home and the Augusta VAMC; and regularly organizes and participates in various entertainment, bingos and ice cream socials sponsored by her unit for the VA. Ethel especially enjoys working with Junior Auxiliary members and not only involves them in activities, but serves as a mentor for these young ladies instilling in them her commitment to respect, honor and serve our nation's heroes.

Ethel's auxiliary membership eligibility is through her late husband, a disabled World War II and Korean veteran, who served a total of 36 years in the Army Air Corps, Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve.

Continued from page 1

Chicago for the HSM Trainee position, stated that her experience was very rewarding. "It prepared me for the management world of the VA. I have been able to look at things from a different window, a broader window." Angela completed her program in October 2004 and now serves as Business Manager for Specialty Care. The Augusta VA has been fortunate to have other former trainees that have been hired in full time positions, they include: Sherry Williams, former HSM Trainee and current Business Manager for Mental Health and Geriatrics; Julie Dangar, former Administrative Resident, currently the Program Analyst in Primary Care; and Shawana Burch, former HIM Trainee, is now a HIM Specialist.



Ethel H. Bussey-Mear



PULSE POINTS

DID YOU KNOW?

For Fiscal Year 2005:

- There were 7,201 discharges
- 304,415 outpatient visits
- 1,447,760 prescriptions filled
- 961 Spinal Cord Injury patients currently enrolled.

We Are Fully Accredited!

For Fiscal Year 2005:

- JCAHO (all programs)
- CARF (Spinal Cord Injury, Medical Rehabilitation, Blind Rehabilitation, Vocational Rehabilitation, Homeless Veterans Program, Active Duty Rehabilitation)
- American College of Surgeons (Cancer Program)
- College of American Pathologists (clinical laboratories)

How Do We Compare?

Measure	2004 Commercial*	2004 Medicaid*	2004 Medicare*	VAMC Augusta**
Breast Cancer Screening	73.4	54.1	74	87
Colorectal Cancer Screening	49	N/A	52.6	75
Cholesterol Management After a Heart Attack (LDL-c < 100)	50.9	28.5	54.3	72
HbA1c Poor Control in Diabetics (HbA1c > 9 – Lower is better.)	30.7	48.6	22.5	19

What Do Our Inpatients Say?

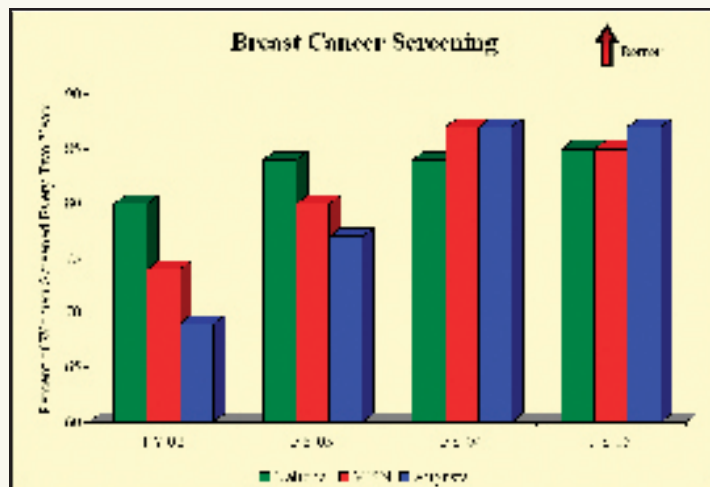
(% Of patients with favorable responses)

	Access	Coordination of Care	Courtesy	Education & Information	Emotional Support	Family Involvement
VA System	80.73	78.27	89.4	67.36	65.08	75.37
Southeast Network	80.7	78.7	89.3	68.4	66	74.9
VAMC Augusta	83.4	79.9	90.6	70.8	69	77.6

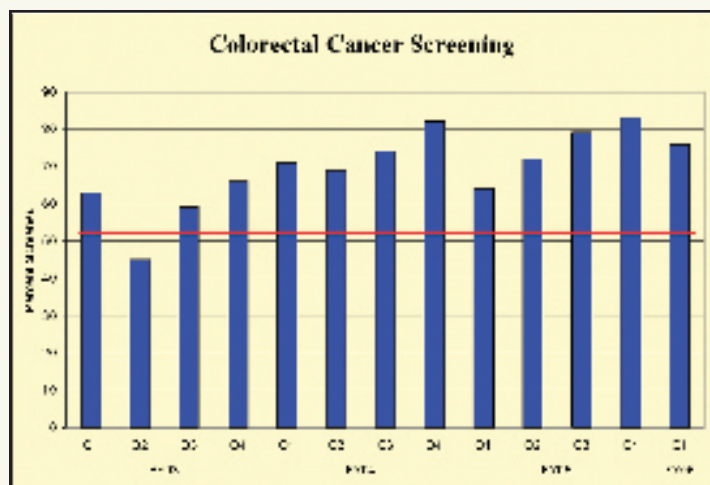
What Do Our Outpatients Say?

(% Of patients with favorable responses)

	Continuity Of Care	Courtesy	Education & Information	Emotional Support	Overall Coordination
VA System	77.2	94.8	72.6	83.2	75.4
Southeast Network	78	93.1	71.6	80.6	75
VAMC Augusta	78.5	96.8	75	84.7	76.7



A woman living in the U.S. has a 1 in 7 lifetime risk of developing breast cancer. In response to this national health care concern, Augusta VAMC has increased efforts to assure timely mammography for patients. As a result, breast cancer screening has steadily increased over the past four years.



Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in the U.S. If detected early through effective screening measures, 85-95% of patients with colorectal cancer can be cured. This graph shows the percent of patients screened at the Augusta VAMC. The red line indicated the best reported non-VA practice (52.6% - 2004 Medicaid).

Civility, Respect and Engagement of the Workforce (CREW) Pilot

VISN 7 is one of eight pilot sites for Civility, Respect and Engagement of the Workforce (CREW) nation-wide. Kim Foss, Business Manager, Primary Care, is the VISN 7 CREW Champion and represents VISN 7 on the National CREW Implementation Team. The CREW initiative is being piloted in Primary Care with Primary Care Teams A, B, C and D.



The CREW initiative was developed after an analysis of employee feedback from the FY 04 All Employee Survey (AES) showed a positive relationship between perceived civility, respectfulness and employee engagement in the work environment, and employee satisfaction. Substantial data exists which shows those departments, service lines and facilities that rated the highest in civility also had the highest employee satisfaction, highest outpatient/inpatient SHEP scores, and employee retention rates, along with the lowest incidence of ULPs, EEO cases and grievances. Essentially, the finding was that civility had a positive ripple effect across the entire organization. The objective of CREW is to raise awareness of the importance of civility and respect among co-workers and management, define "respectful workplace" and identify and address the barriers that may get in the way of achieving a civil, respectful workplace.

The first CREW session was held with Primary Care in September '05. The teams used AES results on civil and respectful behavior in Augusta compared to VHA to kick off group discussion and the results of a CREW Survey of the Primary Care staff to identify the focus areas for the teams. In response to staff feedback, a management feedback survey was also developed with help from the National Center for Organizational

Development (NCOD). The survey tool allowed the staff to provide anonymous feedback on management performance to include strengths and weaknesses. The goal was to improve the level of trust between staff and management and to give the staff a voice in the process.

Thus far, a total of eight CREW sessions have been conducted. As part of the process, a weekly Primary Care News Times is being published to keep the staff informed about significant current and future happenings in the service. Since the first CREW meeting the teams have been working to improve communica-



Pictured from left to right Primary Care Team staff: Jerry Houston, RN; Deborah Wakefield, Social Work; and Vernon Key, Clinic Coordinator

tion, employee/patient safety issues, and employee recognition and awards. One of the innovative programs developed is called CREW in Action (CIA). Primary Care has enrolled staff to be secret CIA agents to "catch" and recognize staff doing the right thing and treating people with civility and respect. According to Kim Foss, "the CIA initiative has been extremely successful. We are all having fun and it's a very creative way of recognizing CREW behaviors. Staff are always trying to find out who the CIA agents are, but my lips are sealed".

The official kick-off of the CREW VHA will take place in March 2006 when Linda Belton, Network Director, VISN 11 and Chair, National CREW Implementation Team presents the pilot findings to senior VA leadership

at the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE).

Jerry Houston, RN, PCT D says, "the CREW experience has been great! It is a wonderful stress reliever and you can tell that staff are much more conscientious about other people's feelings. People really think about the impact of what they are going to say before they say it."

According to Vernon Key, Clinic Coordinator, PCT A, "CREW has significantly increased the interaction of the employees amongst themselves and with management. It has given the staff an avenue for expressing the wants and needs. I've noticed that people are listening more to one another and maybe working a little harder to help one another out. The CREW in Action (CIA) program has been outstanding and a lot of fun and the weekly Primary Care News Times really keeps us informed".

Deborah Wakefield, Social Worker, PCT C says "CREW is fun and allows us to unleash our creativity! The work environment is a much happier, lively and supportive place. People smile more and are more helpful and supportive of one another. It has been great and gives us the opportunity to in a respectful way express our thoughts and feelings to co-workers and management".



Wedding Vows Renewed

Five veterans from the Social Model/Dementia Care Unit renewed their marriage vows with their wives during a unique service held on Friday, February 17th in the VA Chapel. The couples were escorted to the front of the chapel and renewed their vows together in a beautiful ceremony. The service was officiated by Chaplain Paul Schantz and special music was provided by Samantha Osteen, a harpist and youth volunteer, and Sheri Smith, the Music Therapist. The event was attended by families, the senior management and other hospital staff.

Following the ceremony, the couples attended a lovely reception where they were toasted by attendees and enjoyed wedding cake and hors d'oeuvres prepared by the Food and Nutrition Department. The brides were given portraits and a ceremony DVD from Medical Media and received a lovely ceramic frame from

their spouses to hold the photograph of the special day. A heartfelt thank you goes out to the Military Order of the Purple Heart for sponsoring the event and to the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) Department of Georgia and ALA 192 for funding the frames and gifts for the brides.

This event was planned by the program's Recreation Therapist, Denise Whitten,

Sheri Smith, Music Therapist and the nursing staff to commend the wives for their enduring love, commitment and dedication to their husbands; and to honor them during this Valentine's season. This was the second vow renewal ceremony conducted at the Augusta VA. The first was in February of 2003. To all those attending, the ceremony was touching and the commitment of the couples inspirational.



Renewal of vows in VA Chapel, reception following ceremony

Foodservice Employees Go All Out To Make Holidays Special for Long Term Care Patients

The staff of the Nutrition and Food Service Department takes the concept of customer service an extra mile during the Holiday Season. A few years ago it was suggested that it would be nice to invite patients' families to share the Holiday meals with the long-term-care patients who were unable to go home. This has evolved into a truly special effort put forth from Thanksgiving through New Year's Eve.

For the Thanksgiving and Christmas meals, family members share a traditional holiday meal with their loved ones. This year approximately fifty family members participated. Nutrition and Food Department employees dressed for the occasion and donned black bow ties to serve the veterans and their special guests. The employees even donate their own decorations for the tables and tree in the dining hall. According



Volunteers assisting with Food and Nutrition Holiday festivities are pictured left to right: Simone Brown, MSW; Ronald Hyman, MD; Anita Bell, Library Services; Jamel Johnson, volunteer; Thembi Johnson, volunteer; Denise Simms, Accounting; Fernanda Gordon, RN; Heather Wilkerson, Social Work Intern; and Michelle Mitchell, LCSW.

to Dora Chaplin, Chief Nutrition and Food Department, "the staff really enjoys and looks forward to doing this for the patients."

On Christmas Eve, eggnog and special cookies were served to the patients on their units. For New Year's Eve sparkling cider was served from a white napkin-

wrapped bottle in stemmed glasses, accompanied by a special pastry. "Patients on the spinal cord injury unit really thought this was special," Ms. Chaplin says. "One family even saved the glass as a souvenir."

This year, a call went out for employee volunteers to assist with the program by visiting with the veterans and families in the dining hall and sitting with those on the units who were unable to go to the dining hall or had no family to visit. Though the group was small this year, those who volunteered really enjoyed the experience. As word spread, the program is expected to grow with many more employees participating next year. Let's make this another great Augusta VAMC tradition!

SERVICE AWARDS

EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

Angie Rollins - November
Kimberley J. Lowe - December
Lisa B. Rogers - January

STAR TRECC CUSTOMER SERVICE RECIPIENTS

Dr. Nancy McPhail – November
Alvin Peebles - December
Patsy Y. Puczkowski - January

**The following employees have
reached a special milestone in
their years of government service
during the months of November,
December and January.**

10 Year Service Awards:

Robert J. Adams
Jeffrey M. Brandsma
Lloyd O. Cook
George Corvin
Bernard Davidson
Ranjit S. Dhaliwal
Cleston C. Drayton
Volker E. Dube
Dorth G. Falls

Katherine C. Fisher
Kerr R. Foss
Launa L. Graham
Nidhi K. Gulati
Philip J. Hanes
David S. Hull
Cheryl V. Jordan
Don W. King
Steven J. Knapp
Malcom N. Luxenberg
Margaret E. McKinney
Jason M. Mailhot
Vijay Maurya
Anthony A. Maye
Gregory R. Parr
Donald G. Reis
Michael H. Rivner
Harinderjit Singh
Arthur M. Smith
John C. Steele
Joyce A. Stinger
Laurel A. Tucker
Debra D. Zwemer

15 Year Service Awards:

Rosana Boseman
Deborah M. Brown
Caroline F. Caesar
Malvin B. Coogler

Carol H. Davis
Richard M. Davis
Belinda T. Dillard
Jacqueline B. Dority
Uzoma O. Egekeze
Mary P. Forbes
Helen G. Gowan
Billy P. Houke
Monica S. Jackson
Larry T. Mathis
Tonji D. Norris
Della M. Peggins
Connie E. Ready
Carolyn E. Ruff
Leta F. Shelton
Lois A. Shumaker
Mary Smith
Sheri E. Smith
Justine P. Talbert

20 Year Service Awards:

Joan A. Franklin
Mary B. Johnson
Jose M. Leon
Mable Maxwell
Barbara J. May
Mary R. Murray
PD Henley Pollard
Kathleen M. Scott

25 Year Service Awards:

James R. Allen
Musa J. Anderson
Janice Askew
Catherine G. Crowe
Curtis L. Graham
Louise J. Herrington
Linda A. Kolmar
Juanita S. McCarty
Carmelina Schiffbauer
James R. Sprott
Sharon L. Taylor
Veronica Y. Williams

30 Year Service Awards:

Pamela J. Esbjerg
Robert L. Habersham
James L. Hinson
Earnest H. Johnson
Missouri H. Scott
Richard E. Smith
Roger E. Templeton
Keith M. Williams

35 Year Service Awards:

Alice R. Beasley
Daniel J. Griffin
Willie J. Richardson
Hugh A. Wilder

New Service Line Executives Selected

Denise R. Evans, M.D. has been named Executive for the Mental Health and Geriatrics Service Line. Dr. Evans has been on staff at the Augusta VAMC since July 1988. She received her medical degree from the Medical College of Ohio (Toledo) and completed her residency in Psychiatry and Fellowship in Psychopharmacology at the Medical College of Georgia (MCG). She is a member of the American Psychiatric Association and a Distinguished Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association. She is actively involved in translational research and the VA Cooperative Studies Program.

David E. Rivera, M.D., FACS, FASCRS, has been named Executive for the Surgery Service Line. Dr. Rivera formerly was the Chief, Surgery Care Line at Eisenhower Army Medical Center and served as the Surgical Consultant for the Southeast Regional Medical Command. He received his medical degree from Cornell University Medical College. He is a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and a Fellow of the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons. Dr. Rivera has written for medical journals and made presentations in both the U.S. and abroad.

SHOUT OUT! *for Outstanding Staff*

Congratulations to the following staff for their significant contributions, acknowledgements and recognitions.

Jo Anne Capozzoli, secretary for Audiology and Speech Pathology, and her family were featured in the November issue of Augusta Family Magazine. The article focused on her family's 15 years of volunteer work with the Catholic Youth Ministries.

Lena Richardson, ACSW/LCSW and **Glen Windley, LCSW**, presented a poster on "Building Trust with OIF/OEF Combat Veterans and Linking Them to the Appropriate VA/Community Care Partners," at the annual meeting of the Association of Military Surgeons of the U.S. (AMSUS). The poster received recognition as Best in Innovation.

Dr. Rose Trinchler, SLE, Spinal Cord Injury Unit, presented "Collaboration Between the VA and Department of Defense – Providing Services for Active Duty Soldiers," at the 48th Annual Conference of the American Academy of Medical Administrators. (AAMA)

Brian Tindill, Special Assistant to the Director, was elected as the new 2006 Chairperson for the CSRA Federal Executive Association.

Dr. Anthony Cresci, Surgery Service Line, was appointed to the VISN 7 Special Programs Sub-council to lead the Prevention – Amputation Care and Treatment (PACT) Program.

William D. Brown, Safety Occupational Health Specialist, has earned recognition from the International Association of Emergency Managers by being among the group of professionals designated Certified Emergency Manager. (CEM) This is the highest honor of professional achievement available from the association.

Mail Call!

Dear, Mr. Trusley,

Many thanks for your sympathy card regarding the death of my brother. The words do not exist to express my thanks, appreciation and gratitude toward the care my brother received.

I want to convey to you and your staff how wonderful I found his total care to be. I made a point to visit him daily in ICU, or have someone do so followed by a report. We always found him receiving the finest care. In the month we probably encountered all of the nurses at one time or another. I was duly impressed with the care, concern, and attention devoted to my brother's needs. After a few weeks, I expected them to become somewhat jaded to an obviously hopeless situation. I was wrong! My brother was always clean, neat and pain-free. His care could not have been better anywhere!

I wish I could personally address all of his nurses and thank them profusely for their dedication and continued professionalism. Please extend to that marvelous staff the heartfelt thanks of my sister and myself. We will always be in their debt for putting a silver lining and happier side on an otherwise sad and heartbreaking situation.

Sincerely,

CB

P.S. My brother was indeed one of our heroes. As a Naval Ensign he sailed the Liberty Ships as a Merchant Mariner dodging Hitler's submarines in the North Atlantic.

Dear Mr. Trusley,

I just wanted to let you know how much I have enjoyed coming to the Uptown Division. I have received fine services from my doctor, Dr. Stephen Byrd and Social Worker Andrew Davis. I have never received such good care as from the unit 2G staff while being a patient there. I believe with all my heart that when staff takes the time and energy to give their compassion and care to each of us they deserve to be recognized. The dietician, Mr. Fries, took the time to help me with my diabetic diet and all the other staff in x-ray, pharmacy, KT, OT, and RT all helped me to believe in myself and get back on my feet. I believe I have found a VA that I can call home.

Thank you,

LM

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you about acknowledging Dr. Robert J. Thompson of your Eye Clinic. I have been seeing him for over a year and he has given me excellent care. He is very attentive, answers all my questions, has operated on me, and always takes very good care of me. What more can I say? I hope you will hire more doctors of Dr. Thompson's caliber in the future. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

A grateful veteran,

FT

Attention Augusta VA:

I would like to thank two of your employees for being so professional, caring and empathetic. I have been experiencing a lot of medical problems, but employees like Dr. Edward Garner, Primary Care Team C and Mr. Wayne Hadley, Radiology, are among the best. I would like to recognize them for being so outstanding.

Thank you so much,

PC

Special Events Winter '05-06



The Office of the Director sponsored a Holiday Drop In for both divisions on December 7. Canteen Promotional Funds provided prizes for a drawing at each facility.



Staff from the Augusta VAMC participated once again in the annual City of Augusta Veterans' Day Parade on November 11. The hospital sponsored a float and staff walked in the parade passing out small American Flags. All participating staff received an Augusta VA t-shirt.